

Environmental Design Program

Editorial Number 1
September 2002



Maryland Department of Natural Resources
C. Ronald Franks, Secretary
www.dnr.state.md.us

The Skinny on Environmental Design

Dedicated to advancing the application of economically sound and environmentally sensitive building and site-design techniques, the Environmental Design Program provides the business community, local governments and interested citizens with the information and on-site technical assistance they need to identify, implement and evaluate actions to enhance and restore natural resources in and around developed environments. What is significant about the Environmental Design Program is that it recognizes the important role for the "built environment" in the State's commitment to restore the Chesapeake Bay.

Rethinking the Role of the "Built-Environment"

While redevelopment and infill are desirable on a regional basis, they can contribute to already serious water quality problems in developed watersheds. Nearly every element of the watershed ecosystem is impaired during the process of urbanization. Symptoms range from physical alteration, reduced stream habitat and poor water quality to a profound loss in biological diversity. In many ways, this environmental crisis is a design crisis. It is a consequence of how landscapes are used, sites are constructed and structures are built. Quite simply, environmental design is the effort to "re-naturalize" the built environment. This means protecting or re-engineering nature's ability to filter, store, infiltrate, evaporate, and cycle resources – in developed communities. When combined with effective local and watershed planning, these measures cannot only help to protect or restore the local watershed, but they can also reduce overall development costs, make communities healthier and more attractive, conserve resources, and help to ensure that drinking water supplies are replenished.

The Environmental Design Program Practice

The Environmental Design Program helps communities hard hit by development protect and restore streams and watersheds hard hit by development with strategies for landscape management, water conservation, energy conservation and sustainable building practices.

On-Site Technical Assistance: The Environmental Design Program works directly with building industry professionals to help innovative development and retrofit projects come to fruition.

Local Government Planning: The Environmental Design Program works directly with local government partners to generate codes and ordinances and development policies that allow development to proceed in an economically and environmentally responsible



Information and Training: Through a statewide network of local government, business and building industry professionals, the Environmental Design Program is the leading provider of information and training opportunities on innovative building and design techniques in Maryland.

Advancing Individual Stewardship: The Environmental Design Program provides the tools to help local partners and motivated citizens identify, implement and take a more active role in environmental protection.

To learn more about the services offered by the Environmental Design Program, check www.dnr.state.md.us/ed or call 410.260.8710.



Advancing the application of economically sound and environmentally sensitive building and site-design techniques. The Environmental Design Program is an Education, Bay Policy and Growth Management project of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and is funded in part through the Maryland Coastal Zone Management Program, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, pursuant to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Award No. NA17OZ1124. For more information: Tel: (410) 260.8710 www.dnr.state.md.us/ed.

